

EJ Network Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey Response Calls

The purpose of the calls was to reach out to our key EJ Contacts to discuss and listen to communities concerns in impacted areas affected by Hurricane Harvey and provide an update on what we know regarding current response efforts. The call participants provided invaluable information regarding Harvey, that was pass along to appropriate staff in EPA's Regional Emergency Operations Center. Community members representing Texas and Louisiana, the City of Houston – Health Department and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality participated on the call. Calls were held on September 6th, 12th, 19th, and 26th. No calls were held after the 26th due to the completion of the response by the Community Liaisons.

Response to questions, concerns from the 9/6 call

Requests

- Make sampling equipment available for citizens to use. For example, buckets for air sampling. ***The Houston Health Department has arrangements with Air Alliance Houston to provide citizens air monitoring assistance. Contact the Houston Health Department for additional information.***
- Reach colonias north of Houston, tri-county area (Harris, Montgomery, Liberty) to ensure they are safe. ***During the EJ call last week, General Honore offered to help. Referred Lionel's contact information to General Honore – Specific colonias concerns mentioned is Los Trenos, South of Houston in Liberty County.***
- Inform what air monitors are operating and where in the general Houston area? ***Called Air Alliance Houston to encourage complaints/concerns be reported to TCEQ or to call us back with more information to best discern the kind of assistance needed, such as including specific sites or facilities with air quality issues and what the issues are. When we receive more information we will contact TCEQ.***
- Place fulltime EJ staff/boots on the ground to work closely with community residents; residents feel intimidated by industry officials as residents seek to know how their safety needs are being met because of environmental discharges in the environment close to homes. ***EPA R6 has deployed over 20 EPA staff to the Harvey affected counties in Texas, including two EJ staff in Harris County and Beaumont/Port Arthur.***
- Inform on how to best reach TCEQ for timely feedback, including TCEQ efforts in re-establishing air monitoring to cover more areas where air emissions/safety are serious concerns. ***EPA reached out to TCEQ. We will provide that information when we receive it. The online toll free number is 888-777-3186. TCEQ regions can also be directly reached at: Houston, 713-767-3500; Beaumont, 409-898-3838; Corpus Christi,***

361-825-3100. EPA Region 6 will also coordinate with TCEQ on complaints/concerns received by EPA Region 6.

- Report monitoring data results to community in timely manner including air and water sampling data. How is EPA and others getting these results to communities? **WHAT SHOULD BE THE RESPONSE?**
- Assessment and contamination reports from Louisiana regulatory agencies regarding western areas of Louisiana affected by flooding. **Concerns from LEAN**
 - - ***Sabine Diversion Canal – noted the need for agencies to look at the quality of water. Who is monitoring the water that is being pumped into the Canal and then distributed to drinking water sources?***
 - - ***Cameron/Vermilion Parishes – there is a real problem with sediment sludge and a need to sample for contaminant sources. People are walking and possibly ingesting harmful contaminants.***
 - - ***Vietnamese Fisher Community in Iberia Parish were severely impacted by Harvey. What agencies are looking into their concerns?***
 - - ***Vinton Parish was really impacted by flooding. What agencies are looking into their concerns?***
 - - ***Concerned that LDEQ doesn't have data reported from facilities on their EDMS database.***
 - - ***Concerned about venting and flaring from facilities in Calcasieu Parishes. A list of facilities in Calcasieu Parish that were venting and flaring is listed below:***
 - - ***Citgo refinery***
 - - ***Firestone polymers***
 - - ***Phillips 66refinery***
 - - ***PPG -eagle US 2***
 - - ***Westlake polymers***
 - - ***Westlake petrochemicals***
 - - ***Westlake styrene***
 - ***She would like to obtain a copy of those releases.***
 - - ***Assessment and contamination reports from Louisiana regulatory agencies regarding western areas of Louisiana affected by flooding.***

LDEQ provided the following response concerns/requests received from (LEAN)

- (1) No citizens or public officials, in the Hurricane Harvey impacted area, expressed concerns and made notification to LDEQ Regional Office (ARO) nor LDEQ's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) reporting system. All incidents/concerns/complaints that are received are investigated timely upon receipt; and the associated paperwork generated as part of the incident investigation is routed to LDEQ's Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) upon completion. No concerns were raised at the daily GOSHEP call-ins by any of the Hurricane Harvey impacted Parish representatives; nor did Calcasieu Parish Emergency Contact submit a concern via WebEOC.
- (2) Current reports to LDEQ do not demonstrate that the Sabine Diversion Canal discharges into any drinking water sources. However, please contact the Louisiana Department of Health for more comprehensive details on drinking water concerns.

LDEQ is committed to the protection of human health and the environment through permitting, surveillance, and enforcement. While LDEQ provides communications tools that are a reliable and consistent way of being connected with the community, LDEQ also has an open door policy. LDEQ has well established tools and processes that promote and encourage citizen participation and these tools provide for a more efficient and effective responsive.

In addition to utilizing the SPOC ([Single Point of Contact Procedures](#)) tool, the public is further encouraged to utilize LDEQ's public participation process for formally commenting on permit applications. This is an additional tool available for citizens and public officials to have their voices heard. All communications resulting from use of SPOC and the public participation process are memorialized in LDEQ's EDMS, which may be accessed online.

- Communication strategy involving regular meetings with EJ stakeholders providing updates that people can understand. ***EPA has established the Weekly EJ Network Calls to listen and provide updates on what EPA in response to concerns. Also, EPA community liaisons are now stationed in counties throughout the Corpus Christi/Houston/Beaumont-Port Arthur branches of our Emergency Operations Center, working closely with local officials and community groups to improve communication.***

- Provide timely information by all local and federal agencies; residents don't clearly know who and where to go for help. ***EPA community liaisons are now stationed in counties throughout the Corpus Christi/Houston/Beaumont-Port Arthur branches of our Emergency Operations Center, working closely with local officials and community groups to improve communication.***

Agenda for 9/12 Call

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of Call – (update, listen, follow up)
- Update on Action Items from last call
- Response efforts update
- Deployment of Community Liaisons
- Public EPA website for Harvey response updates -
https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=12353
- Contact numbers, emails, etc. for reporting citizens environmental concerns to locals/states/EPA
- EJ stakeholder comments
- Next call/next Tuesday, September 19th @ 10:00 AM (CST)
- Adjourn

Concerns/feedback voiced by the EJ Network include the following:

Requests/concerns from 9/12 call

- Urgent concerns regarding sludge sediment (soil testing) in Western Louisiana and Texas. Hope that agencies are taking a close look. Is there any discussion on soil testing after the storm in impacted areas?
- Is the State of Texas setting up a plan to assist communities by providing them with protective gear/equipment as they re-enter their homes? Bridgette Bohac will bring this concern to TCEQ's attention.
- Lack of response and support from agencies regarding: safety guidance for residential home evaluation/clean-up activities; status of superfund site(s); and access to PPE for individual use in Brazoria County, TX.

General:

- City of Houston – Health Department reported that they are conducting air and water sampling. The parameters are air (benzene and other VOCs) and the water (e.coli).
- In Pt. Arthur, great concern with citizens' re-entry into apartments and homes and the vast amount of debris being placed on the curb. Safety is of high concern.
- Still a high need to get appropriate information and warnings out to people in effected damaged areas.
- No complaints from citizens or public officials in the Louisiana parishes. If there are specific concerns, EPA is willing to visit concerned areas and provide any help that may be needed.
- TCEQ confirmed that their website and reporting number 888-777-3186 are up and working.
- EPA provided a list of Hurricane Harvey Recovery Flyers to the EJ Network.
- EPA provided a list of key contacts to the EJ Network

Freeport

- Concerned with the handling of superfund sites (Dow Chemical)
- Some flooded areas still have standing water
- PPE is needed, in addition to safety measures for citizens doing clean-up now
- Future education on disaster safety and clean-up

Holiday Lakes - Brazoria County, Texas

- PPE is needed, in addition to safety measures for citizens doing clean-up now
- Homes flooded and no insurance.
- Are there warnings posted after test results?

Links providing helpful information on separating debris along with a list of key contacts at the City of Houston – Health Department and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality were sent to group.

Agenda 9/19

- Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of call (update, listen, follow-up)
- Update on Action Items from last call
- Update on Response Efforts
- Public EPA website for Harvey Response updates
- EJ Stakeholders comments
- Next call/next Tuesday, September 26th @ 10:00 AM CST
- Adjourn

A follow-up to the 9/19 EJ Network Harvey call this week regarding mobile monitoring and mobile monitoring units in the Houston, Corpus Christi and Beaumont Port Arthur area Bridget C. Bohac, TCEQ.

The information below is provided in response to questions raised regarding the location of mobile monitoring units and mobile monitoring in the Houston and Beaumont-Port Arthur area during the EPA, Region 6 conference call on September 19, 2017, regarding EJ Network Hurricane Harvey Response. Between the TCEQ and EPA, the following air monitoring assets have been used in the above areas:

EPA Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) flights
EPA Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) mobile monitoring bus
TCEQ hand-held air monitoring instruments
TCEQ contractor, Leak Surveys Inc., helicopter flyovers using optical gas imaging camera (OGIC)
TCEQ continuous air monitoring network.

Both TCEQ and EPA investigators have spent numerous hours, both day and night, monitoring neighborhoods and industrial fence lines with hand-held instruments, such as optical gas imaging cameras, toxic vapor analyzers, and portable multi-gas monitors. The use of these tools allows for the most effective source identification for drifting volatile organic compound (VOC) plumes so that swift action can be taken to address the cause of these emissions. TCEQ investigators in the Houston, Corpus Christi and Beaumont regional offices routinely conduct reconnaissance monitoring near industrial fence

lines and adjacent communities. Reconnaissance monitoring has been conducted in these areas with increased frequency to identify potential emission sources. In furthering efforts to monitor storm impacted areas and address emission sources, the TCEQ is also conducting aerial surveys in the Houston and Beaumont areas using a helicopter equipped with an OGIC that can image VOCs and other hydrocarbons invisible to the eye. Once the TCEQ receives the results from these flyovers, regional investigators in Houston and Beaumont will follow up with facilities to address identified issues.

The EPA, in coordination with the TCEQ, has conducted extensive true mobile monitoring in industrial areas using the EPA's Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) bus and Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) flights that provide real-time sampling of potential emission targets. Additionally, TCEQ conducted aerial surveys described above.

Two of EPA's TAGA mobile air pollution detection vehicles have been deployed for over 50 hours through neighborhoods that border industrial facilities to detect pollution that may result from industries starting up after the storm. At a rate of 210 pollution measurements per minute, over 630,000 measurements have been taken by the TAGAs as of September 15, 2017. Additionally, nine TCEQ environmental investigators and four EPA investigators conducted air monitoring in the Manchester area with hand-held instruments. The results from ASPECT, TAGA, hand-held instruments, and continuous air monitors have shown no levels of immediate health concern.

As data from these, or any other air monitoring efforts, are appropriately quality assured they have been and will continue to be made available publicly. Near real-time continuous air monitoring data from the TCEQ's stationary monitoring network can be found at

<http://www17.tceq.texas.gov/tamis/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.welcome> or

<https://tceq.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ab6f85198bda483a997a6956a8486539>. Daily air quality reports can be found on the TCEQ's Hurricane Harvey response web page at <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/hurricanes>.

Some of your questions regarding mobile monitoring in the Houston area may have resulted from the TCEQ's monitoring vans referenced in media reports. These vans do not possess the capability to monitor while in transit. In fact, under variable weather conditions, these units may not result in finding the plume of air emissions. Also, unlike true mobile air sampling devices, these units take several hours to calibrate and once in the field, have additional set-up time of up to one hour. If the plume of emissions moves, the unit must go through a post-sampling quality control process before it can change locations. To the contrary, actual mobile devices can continue to monitor in transit while moving with the plume of emissions. In responding to the impacts of Hurricane Harvey, the TCEQ has used every available and appropriate resource to support its mission to measure air quality.

Bridget C. Bohac

Chief Clerk
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Agenda 9/26

- Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of call (update, listen, follow-up)
- Update on Action Items and EPA Response Efforts
- EJ Stakeholders comments
- Next call
- Adjourn

No action items were received from the 9/26 call and the group decided to begin holding calls bi-weekly.